

Bob Hardin Testimony
HB 497
Room 472

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Bob Hardin and I am the Manager of Greenfields Irrigation District located in Fairfield.

I am here today to speak in favor of HB 497 that would allow any entity to apply for a water right in excess of 4000-acre feet and 5.5 cfs.

Greenfields is a federally owned irrigation district, which encompasses 83,000 acres and has over 600 waterusers. Our main storage facility is Gibson reservoir, which is located at headwaters of the Sun River. The Sun River drainage is a closed basin and it is understood that any additional storage right issued would be for high spring flows. The problem is the drainage area above Gibson is very large and causes a fill and spill scenario each year creating the loss of thousands of acre-feet of water. This run-off event happens so early in the season that even downstream waterusers don't use it.

Greenfields has always been a very proactive district. Water conservation is and always will be our forefront. The main reason we would like to see this Bill pass is a proposed reservoir enlargement project at Pishkun, which is one of our offstream reservoirs in the Sun River Basin. This is a project that may not get done in our lifetime without the help of alternate funding, as preliminary numbers show it to cost upwards of 20 million dollars. But, before we proceed in any way, water rights issues need to be satisfied.

It is my hope that there is not a lot of opposition to this Bill. It doesn't automatically give a water right to anyone. Everyone will still have to go through the DNRC review process. It basically just gives entities the opportunity to apply.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.